

CHAPTER II

STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

Although following some of the modern scholars it is possible to draw a vague line between the early Mughal art that is the art of the period of Babur and Humayun which is often called as Indo-Persian tradition and the Mughal art understood to begin from the time of Akbar, the great margin of error that is likely to vitiate such an attempt can not be obviated except through very specialised, detailed, tabulated study. The best that can be done here would be to take account of the characteristic features of the style of the Akbari-illustrations without attempting any categorisation.

The artists of Akbar's court were drawn from different parts of the country as well as from Iran. Naturally the style that developed was eclectic of character drawing upon the best of the school of Bihzad as well as of the pre-Mughal Indian arts. At the same time there is evident a painstaking effort to break away from the Persian and contemporary regional styles, a fact very clearly observed in the representation of animal-figures, portraiture and landscape. There is a marked propensity towards naturalistic representation, though the measure of success is largely determined by the artist's association with their respective schools as well as by the commonly accepted conventions. Thus the Persian tradition makes itself emphatically felt in the aerial perspective with a deep blue sky, flat in tone, occasionally sprayed with a bird's flight or stars; in the

simultaneity of vision; bird-eye-view, sparsely grown springing trees; hills with a river or stream and animals shown perched on them, trees laden with flowers; figures imposed on one another, disposal of group of figures over a background of landscape with a very horizon line; representation of objects following a continuously rising view point; even and bright colours; elaborate embellishment of costumes; in the use of lavish gold pigment and the Persian blue and crimson. A Mughal artist draws the inspiration from Iranian stylistic peculiarities accompanied by a very modest Indian tinge on the whole. The greater number of Hindus among the painters at the court of Akbar should have resulted in an encreasing Indianization of the Mughal art. Typical gestures of hands and faces introduced to characterise human figures; elongated-eyes, casually bulging; long, straight tree-trunks; dense-foliage of trees; water displayed by employing gig-gaz lines in white pigment on the grey surface with or without foams or a fish or two, straight or curled, but generally shown submerged in the water and half above it; crowded-animation; round lines; stylised form of leaves; mounds of earth and elephant figures - all these remind of the various native styles of art.

The fusion of Persian and Indian styles was achieved by native
 1
 Indian painters who saw and learned from imported Persian paintings,

1. Indian Painting by Philip S. Rowson; p. 104.

also a few studied under the Persian masters at the court. The
²
 earliest example of this fusion appears in the illustrated pages of
³
 the 'Nimatnamah' the book of delicates - a cookery book made probably
 about A.D. 1500 at the court of the Muslim ruler of Malwa.

Indian trees, birds, animals mounds of earth, rivers etc. etc. find their ways in the miniatures, though represented in the Persian style, gradually disclose a marked Indian style. Casually, the method of shading is employed after the Ajanta painting while the European technique also begins to show up in the deep and thick shading. The Mughal art, during Akbar's time experienced the influence of European art, the most significant of which is the introduction of European perspective. The artists added an importance to the background and aerial perspective to enliven the scene and to make the canvas broad. The flat sky painted in a narrow strip in plain blue or gold pigment is replaced by the background accommodating towns, castles, open-field, boats in a river, a hunting scene, distant hills and trees, a shepherd or a farmer shown at work and lastly the sky represented in broader margin with floating clouds and varying in shades. A similar influence may be seen in the depiction of three dimensions and distance in the objects by reducing the scale as the eye moves forwards the horizon. The distant views of cities in diagonal perspective and massed clumps of trees are directly derived from western examples.

2. Ibid; p. 105.

3. MS. Nimatnamah : C.A. 1500; Indian Office Library, London.

The plastic roundness of form is represented by employing fine shading lines and folds. The draperies, hanging - curtains and the flowing costumes of ladies etc. are mostly painted with deep, shaded-strokes of brush. But traces of these are few and far in between. Attempts are also made to represent human beings in relief. However, the manner in which the European perspective is represented in the ⁴ miniatures, seems followed without always being correctly understood. The general methods remain more or less conventional where uniformity of scale is allowed to persist irrespective of distance.

Interestingly, features of the Chinese art are not wanting in the paintings. One of it being the practice of combining the calligraphy with pictorial art comes from China through Iran where it had become common with manuscript-illustrations. The dragon and some of the motifs with elongated flame-like ends similarly point to the Chinese style. Apart from these there is a good deal in the paintings which may be called original: as for instance in the depiction of violent action, in the introduction of a variety of postures and moods in animal figures specially the deer - elements unobserved in any of the traditions referred to above. There is in these illustrations a richness, a sense of variety and a vivid^{it} of experience which distinguishes them from other contemporary arts and all these elements seem to get synthesized gradually to give rise to the art which has been called as the real Mughal Art, of the later period.

4. Miniatures of Musical Inspiration, part I; by Ernest and Rose, p. 22.

5

A fact mentioned by authors that after the selection of paper, a few sheets were pasted one on the other which provided a substantial thickness to the material seems limited to the miniatures done on loose sheets and portraits. The illustration represented in the different manuscripts are directly painted on single sheets and pasted on the folios of the manuscripts. It is understandable as bounded manuscripts could not accommodate thicker sheets without losing their shape at the open side. The paper was smoothed with the help of a round agate before the sketch was drawn.

On the smooth surface the artist would draw the sketch of the theme. The primary sketch was drawn in scanty, soft lines, suggesting the outer forms of figures. This rapid sketch was developed and correct lines were drawn on them with accuracy of form. These lines were harder than the primary lines. To erase the wrong and superfluous lines a thin coat of white pigment was laid on the sheet. The correct lines were redrawn in dark pigment with a fine brush. This done, the colours were applied to the finish. It is difficult to examine the

-
5. "Once the selection had been made, the chosen sheets were glued together, and the surface of the top one, on which the painting was to be executed, was smoothed and polished with agate". Indian Miniatures of the Moghul School by Hajek Lubor; p.40; Indian Painting- The Heritage of India by P.Brown; p. 118.
 6. It is so observed in the illustrated manuscripts viz.: Tuzuk (Delhi); Diwan (Rampur); Anwar (Varanasi) and Tarikh (Patna); accessible to us in original.
 7. (It is so evident from an illustration represented on folio 242 (Anwar; Varanasi). The miniature represents a helper shown busy in rubbing the paper with an agate, though for the use of calligraphy. This may also betoken as a process of preparing the ground for painting) Indian Miniatures, p.40; Indian Painting; pp. 13-14; The Technique of Mughal Painting by Motichandra; p. 38.



PLATE XIV

pigment used in drawing sketches as the manuscripts under consideration contain no unfinished paintings. A few unfinished paintings can however⁸ be seen in the Moscow manuscript. In these the lines are quite visible and show up against the surfaces treated with the first coat of white pigment⁹ and in some instances against the next coat of the pigment used for background. Evidently the final sketch was drawn in dark pigment (plate xiv).

The pigments could be laid on the paper in varying methods i.e. flat or blending of colours. In the first type the colours are laid flat and no consideration is given to tonality. Different or contrasting colours are used for distinguishing one from other. The colours applied flatly reminiscent to the Persian paintings, is the primary state of making a use of tempera colours. The tempera colours as a matter of rule are used thick which form a layer on the paper. Pigments are painted one on the other when the base colour is finally dried up. The process of shading, final linings and lastly the use of gold pigment involved two to three or even more layers of pigments on a paper. The early illustrations of the Mughal artists, laid in flat colours are two dimensional in effect and lately with the introduction of three dimensions in the Mughal creations, this treatment of colours was replaced by the blending of colours though, the former technique

8. See plates 20 - a pair of birds in the foliage of chunar tree; 25- an outline of a animal figure in the pile of hunted animal; 46- two human figures on the top middle and 56-outline of a bird sitting on hill top in the left of taswir.

9. Ibid; pls. 20 and 25.

remain survived in its changing modes to the last, as such it was the base of treating the tempa pigments. The shaded lines or dots became handy to the artists to exhibit the solidity in the object.

As against this, the technique of blending of colours is casually found in the miniatures. It could emerge only in the treatment of a few subjects viz. sky, hills, tree-trunk, foliage of a tree and rarely in the foreground. In this technique, instead of treating a sketch with a first wash and laying the colours one on the other, here the objects are directly defined in the first treatment, with their tonality, light and shade, in providing a three-dimensional effect. The treatment involves the skill of handling brush employed to achieve the form in one stroke so as to define the dimensions directly. The colour is used thin in this technique. The floating clouds, gradual mixing of two varying shades, in a strip of the sky appear the first place of composition for the use of blending of colours and latterly the hills, trees and foreground etc. etc.

11

Casually, hills or mounds of earth are represented in mass exhibiting light and shade, solidity and height etc. by employing the latter technique. This process also produced newer and newer shades as the

10. Akb; pls. 15, 48, 63, 73, 74, 85 (V.A.); Tarikh; ff. 7b, 26b, 230a (Patna). Razm; pl. 20 (Baroda); pls. 64, 65, 81, 100, 122, 136, 139, 141, 144 (Jaipore). Tuzuk; ff. 44a, 190a, 271a, 379a (B.M.).

11. Tarikh; ff. 48b, 55b (Patna); Tuzuk; pl. 8, 17, 19, 33, 34 (Moscow).

wet pigments when merged in one another naturally, produced a new shade - a mixture of them. The artists favoured blending of colours in parts and we do not come across of any illustration done finally in this technique.

The treatment of pigments in the wash of a tinge was known to the Mughals though, rarely. The process involved first, the thin wash of a tinge on the paper's surface. The base when dried-up, is ready for brush-work. Subsequently, outline of the objects is drawn in colour to distinguish from the background. Other colours to be filled in the various objects viz. costumes, utensils, buildings etc. etc. are obtained from the gradations i.e. tint or shade of the ground colour; and thus the painting is finished in harmonised colour scheme. The tree-trunks, its foliage and sky etc. remain submerged in the background. Though the monotonous effect is winover by the artist who employs fine, shaded lines to represent the anatomy of figures, details in the objects and fineness in the forms and lastly, the three-dimensional effect. Casually, the white pigment or some other pigment of light tone slightly differing from the base is used in¹² the costumes etc. The illustrations displaying this technique are quite distinct from other and austere in appearance.

A few artists have established their originality by handling the pigments in a different way. The treatment of figures and use of

12. Anwar, f. 201 (Varanasi).

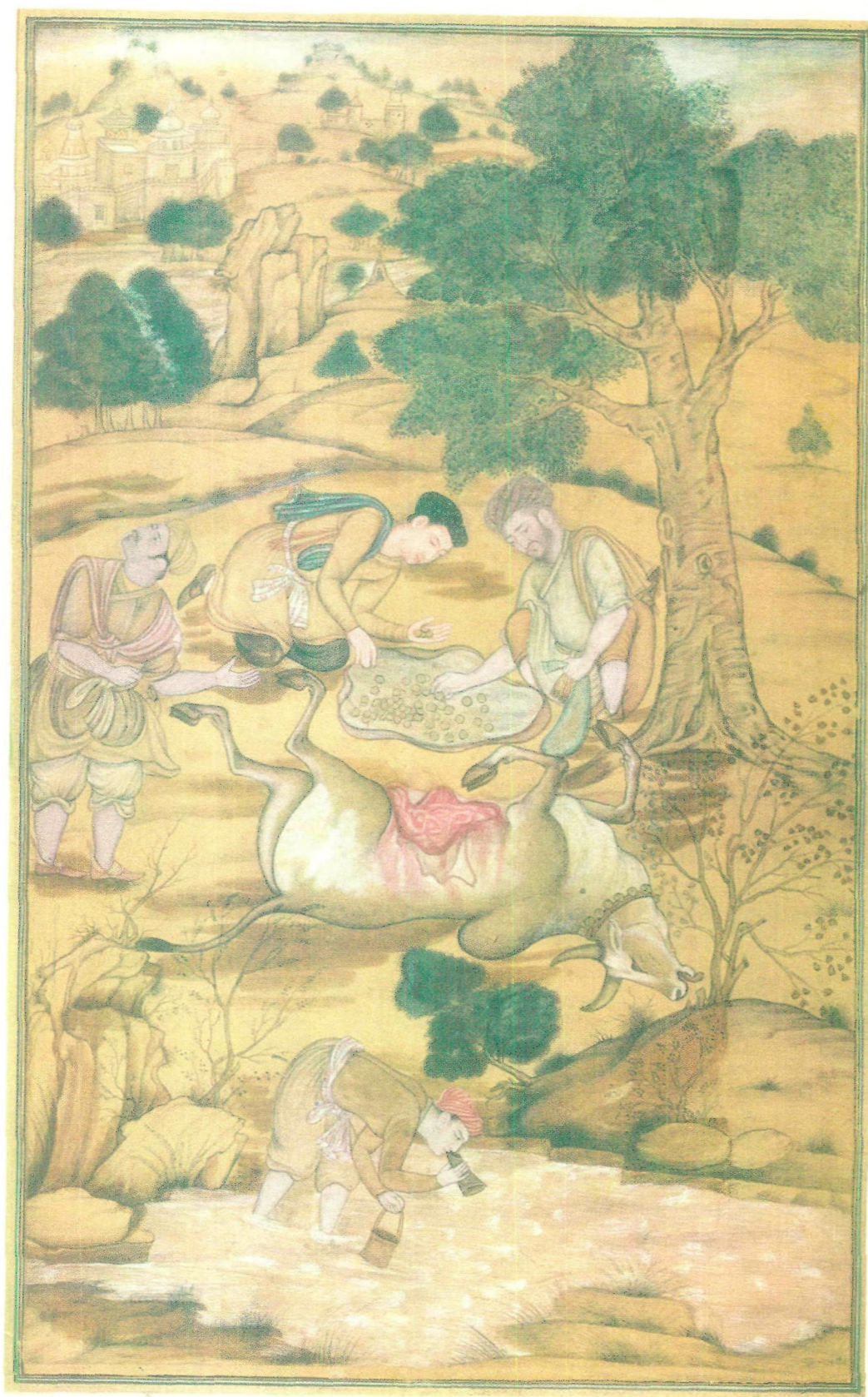


PLATE xv

pigments have remained identical, only the method of presentation has varied. The illustration on folio 478a (Tuzuk; B.M.), by the artist Dhanraj; is submerged in the blue pigment with a tinge of green. The objects : sky, hillocks, fort, trees and the ground which build-up the composition are represented in the harmony of these two pigments. The technique involves the colouring of whole picture in one or two pigments. The figure of an emperor also appear dominated by these colours. His face represented in dark-complexion - a mixture of yellow and green with a tinge of blue, and jama in green pigment accumulate the effect of harmony. Other pigments yellow, crimson, orange and white are also used though sparsely, to display different objects separately. The propensity for blue and green colours shown by Dhanraj has survived in other illustration also, painted by him e.g. f. 305 (Ibid).

The most illustrious picture in this technique finds its place in the manuscript Anwar; Varsnasi on folio 233. The whole scene is subdued in one colour - chrome yellow with a tinge of brown. The human figures, their costumes; animal figure of an ox; tree trunk; hills; water and the distant landscape comprising of buildings, mounds of earth - all have submerged in the background-colour. The details are also represented by employing the deeper shade of the same pigment. The shaded strokes employed on the bottoms of the figures, directed in a side - suggest the shadow and produce the depth in the picture. The illustration is quite distinct for its colour-treatment and the over-all effect of one colour used to build-up the whole scene. It is the

shell or gun-colour, unfortunately these have not been used on the fabric. One could well desire the whole representation in one pigment. The clothes of the figures are depicted horizontally (plate XV). The artist's tendency to representing the every minute details irrespective of distance and the position of human visibility and lastly, the love for decoration fitted the best with the pigments laid flatly. The first colour needed in any work for introducing the designs, and easily accommodated the gold pigment, laid invariably as a matter of course, flat. The crown, sceptre, dress, necklace, arms and ornaments, utensils etc. etc. are represented with profuse decoration. As against this, the draperies, hanging-curtain etc. depicted in three dimensional effect achieved by applying thick shaded lines, are invariably shown plain. Similarly, the lower garments viz. the garments of ladies, and of troops etc. are left plain though the folds and curves are distinguishable through the use of simple lines. Hence the miniatures partly finished in the technique of colour - bleeding are austere comparatively than those done in flat colours.

In the objects painted in flat colours the effect of three-dimensionality is achieved by introducing shade. The shading of figures is done in two stages. An original colour is spread on the surface first, then darker shades are applied. This can be done either on dry or wet surface. In the first instance the original pigment is allowed to dry up and shading is done through fine, small and close lines or sometimes through dots. These lines are drawn in different forms and angles, for instance curved or straight which may be laid diagonally,

horizontally and vertically. In the miniatures these are visibly drawn by single strokes of brush. These are clearly visible in the treatment of tree-trunks; heaps of mounds; hillocks; uneven, grassy-ground; animal figures and architectural designs. Strokes are drawn according to the modelity of the object. Subsequently, the uniformity of the figure has survived to the last. The folds, knots, pits and bulges represented with tree-trunks; mounds of earth, figure of an elephant are the best examples of the strokes drawn in varying forms accomodating the natural shape of the object. Similarly, in the pillars shaded lines may be drawn round or circular in form to enhance the effect of roundness. The varying forms of the strokes depended on the method of wielding a brush.

In the second instance the shading pigment gradually mixes-up with the original pigment while still wet. The lines get diffused so as to leave no discernible traces of parting strokes between the lighted and the shaded portion. The process is followed in the technique of direct-blending of colours.

Usually, darker tones of the original colours are found applied for the purpose of shading objects. Shading by different colours of darker hue is also sometimes met with. Shading technique is also found employed in order to create contrast between the objects. It is also applied for distinguishing the figures from the background. The illustrations belonging to the manuscripts : Tuzuk (B.M.); Akb (V.A.) and (C.B.); Razm (Jaipore) are embellished with the finest

details of nature, designs and motifs. The Tuzuk (Moscow) and Ram (Baroda) are subtle in designs and motifs. The Anwar (Varanasi); Diwan (Rampur); Tarikh (Patna) and the Tuzuk (Delhi) find it place in between them.

The ground colours used are not necessarily of light tones but are lighter than those to be applied in the subsequent fillings. The artist does not find himself bound by any convention regarding the gradation of colours except that the first filling should not obtrude on those to be followed next, but serve as a suitable base for those to be superimposed. A dark tone at the base is therefore followed by a darker one. Evidently, the artist began with primary pigments and finished the work in darker shades of the same pigments.

In the use of the primary colours the artist betrays a lack of variety of tonality. His imagination is limited and the paintings suffer from repetitions of similar colour-schemes.

Outlines of individual figures is almost a dogma with the painters. It is the first as well as the final stage of his work and receives his utmost care. The painting is begun with a sketch defining the limits of the objects within which his brush must move. After colouring and shading, these lines are finally confirmed in a darker tone and the figure is bounded into a well-defined form. At this stage the work of colouring the miniature is over and the pigments are left to dry-up.

For the choice of colours of natural objects the painters depend for

inspiration on nature itself. But in the colouration of designs and decorative motifs he allows himself a greater freedom and tries to bring out the best from his imagination. No particular norm is followed. Exquisiteness and decoré is his aim here. The emerging patterns may be conceived in a variety of ways: matching or contrasting the general colour-scheme, gaudy, austere, flat or tonalised, displaying the maximum variety of colours-repetition of two or three colours or predominance of a particular colour.

A certain procedure is also not difficult to discern as having been generally adopted in the matter of colouring. Human figures being the main objects of representation are treated first and foremost. Animal figures come next and the background is coloured in the last. This only shows that the artist began the work of painting without any definite scheme in his mind. The colour of the next figure was determined by that of the previous one and these may or may not be in keeping with the first wash given to the background. When human and bird figures were completed, the background had to be treated patch by patch or part by part as required by the objects in the foreground.

Metallic power : Gold dust is an important medium of the Mughal artist. Although gold was not regarded as colour, yet was frequently used in lavish quantities in single paintings in the way that the colours were used. Generally the pow^der is found used partially, as for instance, to expose a particular part of a figure. It produced an extra-glaze in the illustrations. Ornaments, costumes, arms, armours and designs

and the common subjects rendered in gold dust. Generally, the gold pigment is employed to represent the aerial perspective. The sky could be depicted fully or partly in the gold pigment to announce the morning or evening time. Usually the flames of fire and sun-rays are treated in a free manner.

The miniatures were placed on the mounts by a basligar (one who mounts the taswir, a book-binder). The mounts were prepared of an extra thickness by pasting two or three sheets of paper one on the other, to provide a substantial ground to the picture. The illustrations of the manuscripts are directly pasted on the sheet of paper commonly used for calligraphy and no special mount or paste-board is provided for support.¹³ Only in one instance, folios of the Diwan-i-Hafiz are provided with mounts of an extra thickness embellished with floral motifs drawn in gold dust.¹⁴ The miniatures were not separately bounded in the books but were placed on the manuscript leaves at the appropriate place, i.e., along and in the textual sequence of events described. These leaves being thin were unsuitable for mounting the miniatures specially those made in tempera. As a result, the leaves used as mounts have got soiled with the material used for binding colours which is visible on the back side. Evidently, from the point of view of preservation of the paintings, this kind of mount was inadequate.

13. The conclusion has been drawn after examining the illustrated Mss. available to us e.g. The Tuzuk (Delhi); Anwar (Varanasi); Diwan (Muzur) and Farish (Patna).

14. Appendix no. 3.

Margins are decorated with floral designs or plainly closed by employing several bands of lines in varying pigments. Only the miniatures of the Tuzuk (Moscow) are without any close of bands of lines or hashyas.

The paintings generally bear the name of the artists. Many of the names appear on the lower hashya showing that they were written by by different person, probably a naqshnavis, after the pasting of the mount. The tradition of signing the work was not in vogue at the Mughal court. Though the names appearing on the illustrations themselves may be the artist's autographs. Rarely, one miniature signed¹⁵ by the artist Lal comes to our view on folio 6b (Akb. C.B.). Anyway, the practice of signing one's own creation does not seem to have been common. The paintings of the Tuzuk (Moscow) at all do not display the name of artists.

The Arabic word Amal is used for 'execution' or Rang-amezi - the Persian term for colouring. The sketch has been distinguished from the colouring or painting. Tarah is used for outline or sketch-drawing. In case when Amal stands alone, it employs execution of the

15. The folio 27b of the same manuscript exhibits the name-Kishan das, in the right hand of picture; and the inscription of the hashya reads amal Lal. The significance of the former name remains to be ascertained. However, we do not come across this name as artist.

picture by a single artist. In the Razmnama (Jaipore) the term Rang - amezi is preferred for colouring.

Occasionally, the names of two artists on a single painting are met. In the joint-works - the sketch and colouring are done by two different artist e.g. on plate 21 (Akb. V.A.); outline by Basawan, painting by Chatur¹⁵. We come across of many examples of joint-works in the manuscripts: Akbarnama (V.A.); Razmnama (Jaipore) and Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuriye (Patna). Casually, three artists have worked on a picture - still further the number of collaborators in one work could be four even. The plate I (Akb; V.A.) represents - outline by Miskin; colouring by Sarwan; the faces (Chihra-nami) by an artist whose name is not clear and the figures (Surat) by Madho. Generally the work has been distributed in three parts viz. outline, painting and face-drawing. For the last the Persian term - Chehranami is used. Sometimes two artists worked to finish the face-drawings in one picture. The inscription on folio 32b (Akb; C.B.) shows three names of the artists : Anal Farrukh, Chehranami Manohar and Anant. It is not clear how such a complicated arrangement was worked. The method of joint-work involved mostly two artists - one for sketch and the other for colouring; or one did the sketch and colouring and the next finished the face-drawings. The Mughal artists seem accustomed of this type of mechanisation of division of labour and the system was in vogue in the middling years of Akbar's reign. The illautrated manuscript of Razm

15. See appendices - 1, 4 and 5.

(Jaipore) dated 1582 A.D., represents the joint-works very commonly.¹⁷
 The similar case is with the Akb. (V.A.) and Tarikh. (Patna); which¹⁸
 belonged to the ending years of the reign. Though, it was not a
 universal system of work for the illustrations executed earlier or
 in the intervening period. The Anwar (Varanasi); dated - A.D. 1596-97;
 and Tuzuk. (Delhi); dated - A.D. 1599; mostly represent the single name¹⁹
 on an artist on one miniature.

One is inclined to think that in this system of division of labour
 the skill of the painter should have tended towards the delimitation.
 The talent of an artist depended on the side-artist. The work of
 sketching and colouring are complementary to one another. The artist²⁰
 Basawan who is mostly assisted in his works by a side artist, has
 produced better pictures, only when a good painter worked on his side.
 Further there was nothing like the specialization of a particular
 branch of art e.i. sketching or colouring. An artist engaged for
 outline-work on one illustration is seen employed as a side artist
 for colouring also.

17. Appendix - 4.

18. Appendices - 1 and 5.

19. Appendix - 6.

20. Tarikh; ff. 4b, 6b, 7b, 9a, 16b, 17a, 30a, 53b, 54a, 57b, 58b,
 61b, 62a, (Patna); Razm; pls. 10, 21, 22, 50, 59, 64, 65, 76, 112,
 115, 117, 120, 121, 122, 124, 126, 127 (Jaipore); Akb; pls. 17,
 18, 21, 24, 24, 50, 61, 62 (V.A.).
 (He worked as a side-artist on plates: 12, 39, 40, 53, 84, 106, 113,
 145 (Razm; Jaipore); Tarikh; f. 8b (Patna); Akb; pl. 81 (V.A.).

One wishes very much to be able to mark out the special features of the art of the different masters, a task too difficult to accomplish with the present means of investigation. More so, as their common features predominate the paintings, rendering such points as may seem to be individualistic of character, insufficient for any conclusive argumentation. All the artists use the same tools. Despite the heterogeneity found in colour-schemes, the colour-media and the method of their application remains the same. Formula - forms, standardised proportions, lines and curves and above all the method of bringing out the effects of distance, perspective, foreshortening, all persist so unchangingly throughout that to a cursory viewer the paintings could well have been the work of a few artists. The thematic variety that is characteristic of all such illustrative works, leaves little scope for consistency in expression. Painting now a battle scene, now a court scene, now a hunting scene, or at another time a garden or a bird catcher at work etc. etc., the artist goes on changing the modes of expression. The objective unity is thus lost or gets mixed up with the commoner features. Besides it, the system of joint-work of two or more artists on a single folio has submerged the identities of individuals.

That the elements of individuality was not entirely wanting in the artists, is evidenced by examining some of the illustrations by Dhanraj, Paras, Shankar, Farrukh Beg etc. etc. The former shows a noticeable skill in the horizontally curved lines which are used with great clarity and boldness for shading the mounds and tree-trunks.

He displays propensity for the blue and green colours which are²¹ skillfully manipulated to achieve particular atmosphere. Paras²² seems to specialise in the use of straight lines. These are laid both horizontally and vertically for bringing out the shaded portions of background and costume-folds. War scenes and congregational settings in light colours seem to be the speciality of him.

²³ Shankar is a skilled designed artist, his paintings stand out for decoration and compactness. Shankar Gujrati is fond of lemon yellow with a tinge of light orange. His creations have a soothing effect²⁴ and an import of delicacy.²⁵ The artist Dhanno specialises in the depiction of garden scenes.

²⁶ The illustrations done by Farrukh Beg - an artsit of Qalmuck origin; have entirely Persian school effect in its feeling and atmosphere. The drawings of human and animal figures, designs displayed on costumes, buildings and ensigns etc; the depiction of hills and trees — all associates the Persian style.

21. Tuzuk; ff. 204, 305, 478 (B.M.).

22. Ibid; ff. 54, 194, 299.

23. Ibid; f. 252.

24. Ibid; ff. 279, 314, 391, 395.

25. Ibid; f. 173.

26. Akb; pls. 96, 117 (V.A.).

Perspective

The illustrative character of the miniatures introduce a great thematic variety. As we turn over its pages we see a panorama of objects: the sky, mountains, rivers, trees, buildings, men and animals, all depicted in different moods, actions and planes. In the manipulation of the themes the attention of the artist is concentrated mainly on achieving aesthetic satisfaction. The ornamental designs and motifs complementing the main figures are used as additional means to obtain that effect. Hence the bias for details which are carefully rendered in uniform size, irrespective of distance or height giving the impression of a stylised technique. Perspective, as a dimensional expansion of objects does not seem to have been properly understood. The horizontal extension of the view has given place to vertical elevation. The effect of the flat upward projection of objects is further deepened by the absence of atmosphere, light and shade.

It may be said then, that the method of the treatment of lines, forms and colours which go to build up a perspective is either not known to the painters or is deliberately avoided in favour of graphic, wholesome representation of the objects. This is most clearly observed in their treatment of such inanimate objects as minerals, floors, buildings, hills etc. all of which are depicted without consideration being given to the rule of the convergence of lines or their vanishing distance. That, we do casually find a greatly diminished hill or a tree introduced to symbolise distance, is a fact

that evidences the lack of a correct understanding of the phenomenon on their part. The intervening space which is shown flat and unaffected by the visual change taking place with the increase of distance, makes these objects look just arbitrary.

The same is true about their understanding of the principle of eye-level. The figures are juxtaposed at different levels. The plane remains vertical. The objects are depicted in an ascending sequence signifying increase in distance, which effect is further enhanced by the application of soft and hard colours alternately. The objects drawn on different planes, imposed one upon the another is identical to the Persian qalam. Various planes are employed to divide the composition in several parts to represent different events taking place at one time or the events specifically related to the central theme. One is tempted to think that such divisions are not incidental but have been deliberately introduced as additional devices for producing the effect of height and distance. The horizontal plane is depicted by human and animal figures. Height is represented by the sky. The hills symbolise distance while the buildings and trees produced the effect of vertical plane.

Planes could be distinguished by introducing a hillock, or a castle, or a mound of earth or sparsely grown trees, tufts of grass or springing plants, a stream or a river; and in the indoor or camp scene a carpet or palace-wall etc. in between them. Tanks, floors, carpets and shamyanas are drawn flat so as to have the top-view before the eye. Men animals, birds, trees, buildings, utensils etc. are drawn

from the direct - view. The absence of unity in the perspective; or the presence of multiple perspective-convergent and divergent etc. have resulted in the enhancement of the tilting effect. The restricted tonality in colour also gave a tilting effect.

Casual examples of distant - landscapes are also met with. The objects treated are generally buildings, a castle visible from a hunting or battle-field or a expedition scene, as well as trees and hills. The representation of hills with springing trees, animals shown perched on them and the trees laden with flowers and green foliage is according to the Persian tradition. Here no particular scale seems to have been used for determining sizes. Details become sharper but do not disappear. Colours fade but not sufficiently.

²⁷ However in a few instance the distant landscape has been shown hazy in colours, submerged in the background. The tree or a hill appear in a patch of grey, greenish or bluish pigment. The scale too has diminished and the details have disappeared. But this representation of the objects in far distance, instead of serving as perspective, seem to divide the painting in two distinct parts. As the portion immediately before the eye is rendered in flat colours, leaving little scope for the use of the usual means of depicting distance of

27. Akb; pls. 78, 81, 87, 105, 106 (V.A.); ff. 122b, 123, 188 (C.B.); Tarikh; ff. 12a, 48b, 55b, 67b, 89b, 126b, 144b, 157b, 226a, 322a, 323a, 328b, 337b (Patna); Razm; pls. 14, 20 (Baroda); pls. 30, 123, 124, 142 (Jaipore); Tuzuk; pls. 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 19, 27, 30, 32, 34, 36, 53, 65 (Moscow); ff. 23, 128, 190, 191, 305, 347, 368, 452, 468, 504, 522 (B.M.).

depth. Thus the intervening space remains unaffected of the visual change taking place with the increase of distance. This is however, compensated by introducing tonality in the representation of distant landscape and the sky. It may be said then, that the artists were not unaware of the principles governing the visuality of objects at hand and at distance, though the application of these principles in art was not quite clear to them. In a few paintings, distant objects are shown shorter than those in the foreground, but the diminution is too slight to correspond the distance shown. Moreover the decrease in size of an objects at the same level is not proportional. Gradual fading of colours may be found applied for building of perspective but the effect is to a considerable degree neutralised by the presence of details at all levels.

The light-effect is invariably flat. All the objects are shown bathed²⁸ in the light from all the sides. In the night scenes also the pigments employed in the objects and landscapes are not different from those represented in the day scenes. The pigments hardly help us to distinguish the time or weather. However, an Akbari painter was not quite unaware of the aerial-perspective. To depict the same he is assisted by the representation of sky. Getting away from the strict Persian convention, he painted the sky in varying colours viz. orange,

28. Tarikh; ff. 5b, 45a, 246b (Batna); Razm; pl. 11 (Baroda); pls. 32, 67 (Jaipore); Tuzuk; f. 314a (B.M.).

red, yellow etc. etc. to announce the morning or evening time. The sun could be introduced to declare the bright day and as against this a crescent or a full moon with a starlit sky to depict the moon-light. Though the rest of the scene remains unaffected and the introduction of a sun, or a moon or a starlit sky or the flight of birds continue as symbols.

Linear perspective has become practically difficult with the introduction of several planes in one picture; and the drawings of different objects from varying views and angles. The position of an artist's eye is invariably shown changing. The convergence of angles is rarely represented in a few buildings etc. Broadly speaking this principle hardly involves in their depiction. The effect of perspective has also suffered on account of the flat treatment of colours.

In the indoor-scenes and in outdoor scenes also the ground is sprigged with plants with flowers composed alternately on a measured distance. As against this, the ground in the hunting, battle and expedition scenes, is represented with the variation of gradations in pigments which gives a suggestion of scale-perspective. This²⁹ produces almost the effect that picture itself is alive or rather that the onlooker himself in motion experiencing the phases of the picture as a sequence in time.

29. Philp, S. Rowson; p. 111.

For producing three-dimensional effect the artist employ the common technique of exposing roundness and solidity of the parts of the figures. This is done by shading the outlines and rendering the space in between them in light colours. This is easily discernible in the treatment of pillars, costume-folds, human and animal figures, utensils and tree-trunks etc.

Shadow is not depicted by the artists. Figures are distinguished from the background by shading the pigment around them. Adjacent figures are distinguished by variation in costume design and colours, as well as by deepening of the outlines. In group paintings, each figure is treated independently as a complete object in itself which is linked to the rest of the canvas by the logic of the event illustrated rather than by any specific scheme of light and shade, atmosphere or time. There is no one focal point. Each figure seems to invite the eye to the exclusion of the other and the cumulative effect of a painting rests largely in the theme depicted rather than on any technical unity.

The paintings exhibit a peculiar lack of proportion among natural objects when presented in a single scene. Not unfrequently we meet trees of the size of small plants and human beings, towering forts and buildings. Some of such impropportionate objects seem to have been painted in order to fill up blank spaces. Evidently figures so included had to be reduced or enlarged according to the extent of the blank to be filled in. Figures on the margin are often shown incomplete or covered by the hashya. Most probably, it was done so deliberately to suggest the continuity in the scene.